



State of Washington

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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Main Office location: Natural Resources Building - 1111 Washington Street SE - Olympia, WA

DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (DNS)

Name of Proposal: DNS 16-050: HIGHLINE CREEK BEAVER DAM NOTCHING

Description of Proposal:

Remove a portion of an inactive and unoccupied beaver dam to improve flow through the complex in preparation for piscicide treatments in Fall 2017-2019. A portion of the dam would be removed with hand tools and an opening approximately equal to bankfull width would be established at the dam site. The goal is to modify the inactive beaver dam to allow improved flow through the area and reduce the amount of rotenone needed to treat the complex. Additionally, the modifications to the dam will remove ready hiding places for non-native trout, reduces flow times through the complex, and improve the effectiveness of the treatment process to remove non-native fish.

Brook trout were widely stocked into the Pend Oreille basin beginning in the early 1900's, establishing naturally reproducing populations throughout much of the drainage. Research commissioned by Seattle City Light in 2015 found no WCT in Highline Creek, with the watershed above an historic splash dam occupied solely by brook trout. WDFW and the Kalispel Tribe Natural Resources Department propose to use rotenone to eradicate non-native eastern brook trout in Highline Creek beginning in 2017. Two to three annual treatments (2017 – 2019) will likely be required to completely eradicate non-native fish from the project area. Following the removal of non-natives, WCT would be reintroduced into the treatment section through translocation of fish (adults and/or juveniles) from nearby drainages and/or introduction of fry hatched in remote site incubators at Highline Creek. The initial phase of this project (data collection and site preparation) has been approved and funded through contract with SCL.

We are proposing to use hand tools to cut a notch in two unoccupied and unmaintained beaver dams on Highline Creek. No current (within the last year or years) beaver activity exists in the watershed above the historic splash dam. Notching the antiquated dams will allow the creek to channelize through the beaver complexes prior to treatment, reducing the treatment area behind the dams, improving flow through the complexes, and removing potential hiding spots or refugia for non-native fish. The notching is to be temporary in nature, with the dams restored to functioning condition following treatment(s).

Proponent/Applicant: Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Contact: Brian Walker
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Location of Proposal, including street, if any: Highline Creek, east of Metaline Falls, Pend Oreille County, Washington: Township 39 North, Range 44 East WM, Section 29.

Lead Agency: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

WDFW has determined that this proposal will likely not have a significant adverse impact on the environment. Therefore, state law¹ does not require an environmental impact statement (EIS). WDFW made this determination of nonsignificance (DNS) after we reviewed the environmental checklist and other information on file with us.

We issued this DNS according to state rules². We will **not act on this proposal for 14 days** from the date we issued the DNS. Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this proposal or DNS. We must receive your comments within 14 days of the date of this letter. The comment period will end at **5:00 pm on September 6, 2016**.

Method of Comment: The following procedures shall govern the method to comment on agency SEPA proposals. Comments received through these procedures are part of the official SEPA record for this proposal.

You can submit your comments any one of the following ways:

- Email to SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov
- Online at the WDFW SEPA website comment link at:
http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/sepa_comment_docs.html
- Fax to (360) 902-2946;
- Mail to the address below.

Responsible Official: Lisa Wood

Position/Title: SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Regulatory Services Section

Address: 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501-1091

After the comment period closes, applicants may view the updated status of this proposal on the WDFW SEPA website: http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/sepa_final_docs.html. Once the status is posted as final, applicants and permittees may take action on the proposal. When a proposal is modified or withdrawn, notice will be given in accordance with state law.¹

If you have questions about this DNS or the details of the proposal, contact Lisa Wood at the address, e-mail, or fax number above; you can also call her at (360) 902-2260.

DATE OF ISSUE: August 22, 2016

SIGNATURE:



Footnotes

1. RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c)
2. WAC 197-11-340(2).

SEPA Log Number: 16-050.dns